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OLIPHANT
AND ITS ISLANDS • LAKE HURON
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED
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OUR OWN BROAD LAKE.

Written by the late Thomas MacQueen for the Huron Signal, over sixty years ago.

"Immense, bright lake! I trace in thee
An emblem of the mighty ocean,
And in thy restless waves I see
Nature's eternal law of motion!
And fancy sees the Huron chief
Of the dim past kneel to implore thee:
With Indian awe, he seeks relief,
In pouring homage out before thee;
And I, too, feel my reverence wake,
When gazing on our own broad lake!"

"I cannot feel as I have felt,
When life with hope and fire was teeming,
Nor kneel as I have often knelt
At beauty's shrine, devoutly dreaming;
Some younger hand must strike the strings
To tell of Huron's awful grandeur,
Her smooth and moonlight slumberings
Her tempest voice loud as thunder;
Some loftier lyre than mine must wake
To sing our own broad gleaming lake!"



•• HISTORICAL SKETCHES ••



ERY few of the people who now spend their summers at the cottages scattered along the mainland and islands of Oliphant, and enjoy themselves on the waters of the "immense bright lake," realize that these same regions, not so many years ago, presented scenes of a very different nature, and were the homes of races, which are now almost gone!

Whether or not the intrepid, pioneer explorer of Canada, Samuel de Champlain, in his journey of long ago up the Ottawa River, touched on the eastern shores of the "Mer douce des Hurons", no one can now with

certainty say. Or whether the unfortunate yet undaunted La Salle, when he made his voyage up Lac Huron in the Griffin, thought of taking shelter at the Islands, on his starboard, from the great storm that over-took him, the historian Father Hennepin does not record. But it is within the limits of the possible that even yet some day, the wreck of the long lost vessel, with her monster griffin prow, may be found hidden beneath the sands of our own shores, where so many known wrecks have since sunk into oblivion, and if such should be, we would then surely know that our shores were visited, though in misfortune, by the very early explorers of our country.

INDIAN OCCUPATION Of the days of Indian occupation of the Saugeen Peninsula and its Islands, Time and Tradition have left us only a few traces. The first tribe known to have inhabited the region was a band of the Algonquins called the Ottawas, who were here in the sixteenth century, doubtless the "Cheveux relevez" (straight-up hair), mentioned by Champlain. Later this tribe gave way to a band of the Ojibway Indians from the Lake Superior district; and at the same time, at least one tribe of Hurons lived on the shore in the beautiful spot known as Red Bay. ¶In the beginning of the seventeenth century the two tribes came into conflict with each other and in a bloody battle on the shore of this bay, the Hurons killed so many of the Ojibways that their blood colored the water a deep red from whence came the name.



Next in turn, in 1648, came the fierce warring tribe of Iroquois, whose ambition it was to possess the whole lower valley of les Grands Lacs. The Hurons and Iroquois bore each other a deadly hatred, and the struggle between the two tribes was most bitter. It was then that the "blood-thirsty Mohawk chief," as Pauline Johnson describes, was

"Here in the hated Huron's vicious clutch,
That even captive he despairs to touch."

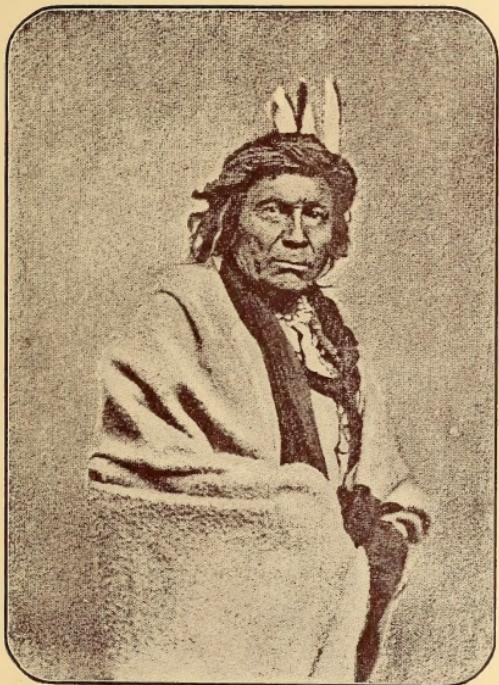
The Hurons however proved the weaker in the conflict, and they were completely exterminated in this region; the Iroquois then took possession of a large part of the land.

Then began the attacks of these Iroquois upon the Ojibways to the south along the shore as far as the Sable and Saugeen Rivers. "The Traditional History of the Ojibway Nation," by George Copway, relates that at this time two forces of Ojibways, assisted by allies from Penetanguishene, attacked the Iroquois at the mouth of the Saugeen River and the fierce battle which ensued ended in the total rout of the Iroquois. Those of them who were not killed, were driven out of the country to the region south of Lake Erie. The victorious Ojibways then settled down to live quiet and peacable lives, only once taking part in a war, when Tecumseh's brother "The Prophet" in 1812 led off a band of braves from this district to fight so nobly at the side of the Great Chief Tecumseh. ¶The population was augmented shortly after the Treaty of Chicago in 1833, when some of the eleven hundred Chippawa, Ottawa, and Pottawatamie Indians who migrated from Wisconsin to Upper Canada, settled in the Saugeen and Sable lands.

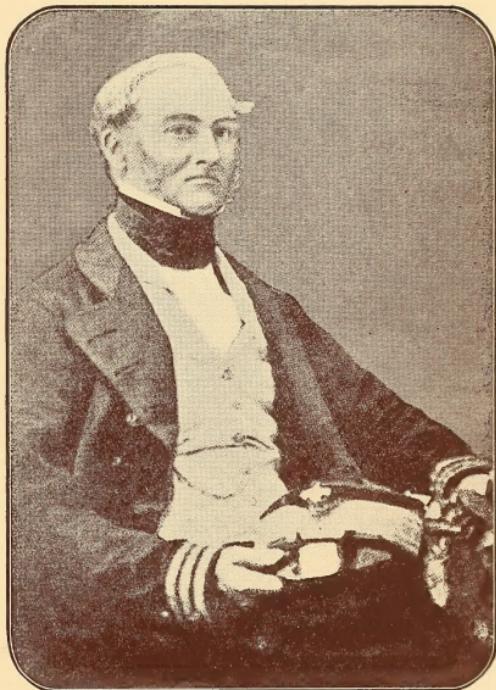
MANITOWANING TREATY So far the white man had little to do in the history of the region. The British had taken possession of Canada in 1760; Upper Canada was being opened for settlement; but it was not until 1836 that any direct attempt was made by the Government to take possession of the Saugeen Peninsula. ¶It was in August of that year at Manitowaning, that Sir Francis Bond Head, the Governor of Upper Canada, negotiated a treaty with the Ojibway Indians of Manitoulin Island and the Saugeen Peninsula, for the sale of their land to the Crown. By this Manitowaning Treaty the territory of Manitoulin



← MEETING OF THE RED AND WHITE RACES. →



Ojibway Chief,
Showing the Racial Characteristics.



Admiral H. W. Bayfield R.N.
1795-1885, Surveyor of Lake Huron.

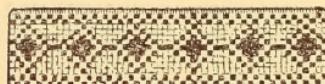
← THE OLD FORT—FROM WATER COLOUR SKETCH.—R. F. →



Island, the Saugeen Peninsula, and their adjacent islands (the whole area being later known as "Queen's Bush") was given over to the government of Upper Canada. In return for these lands the Indians were to receive the sum of £1250 annually, "as long as water ran and grass grew green." We have therefore to thank Sir Francis Bond Head for the acquisition of these extensive Indian lands.

OLIPHANT TREATY Soon after the Manitowaning Treaty, the government appointed Laurence Oliphant, the well known author, traveller, and private secretary of Lord Elgin, as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. It was through his efforts that in 1854 the Oliphant Treaty was negotiated and signed at Saugeen, allowing the government to survey and sell the lands gained by the Manitowaning Treaty. Previous to this in 1847 some of the lands had been surveyed and opened for settlement, but it was not until the year 1855, at the time of the Rankin Survey, that the townships of Amabel and Albemarle, and the town-plot of Oliphant, were laid out. The Saugeen Fishing Islands were formally given over to the Crown in 1885, and were surveyed shortly after. The lowering of the water of Lake Huron, however, caused so many changes in the land that a new survey was ordered in 1899 and completed in 1900. This was known as the James Warren Survey. After this second survey of the Islands most of them were sold to the public.

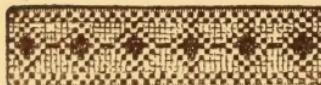
HYDROGRAPHIC HISTORY Of the early maps of Lake Huron and the other lakes the better known are Champlain's of 1632, Sanson's of 1656, and Pere Hennepin's of 1683. ¶Captain W. F. Owen, R.N., sailed up the Lake in 1815; on his map he has shown the Islands as well as the old portage from the Islands to Colpoy's Bay by way of a "lake reported to exist by the Indians" (Boat Lake). ¶But it remained for the great Lieutenant (afterwards Admiral) H. W. Bayfield, R.N., and his assistant Midshipman P. E. Collins, (known to the Indians as Big and Little Chief), to make the first regular hydrographic survey of Lake Huron. This was in 1820 and 1821. They used two six-oared row-boats for their work most of the time, and latterly had the schooner *Confiance*. The last hydrographic survey was made by Commander J. G. Boulton and Mr. W. J. Stewart in the nineties, in the steamer *Bayfield*.



EARLY FISHING We must now turn to the history of the fishing in these waters. In the early days fish were here in great abundance, the most common varieties being whitefish, sturgeon, salmon-trout, and herring. The Indians fished mostly in Smokehouse Channel, Indian Channel, and the Gut, and smoked their fish at the Island called Smokehouse.

CAPTAIN MACGREGOR After the Indians came the whites. The great pioneer fisherman of the Islands was the famous Captain Alexander MacGregor who was the first to turn the fishing here into a commercial enterprise. He was a Scotchman, belonging to Goderich, a man of sturdy rugged character, and an able seaman and fisher. He sailed and fished among the Saugeen Islands during the twenties of last century, and took up his headquarters on the island which he called his Main-Station. Here he built a large stone house now generally known as the Old Fort, on account of its tremendous walls and narrow windows. The date of its erection is somewhat uncertain. Norman Robertson in his interesting volume, History of the County of Bruce, gives the date as about 1834, and yet it is on record that "Larry" Bellmore the old fisherman of this region said he visited the building in 1830, and judged it then to be two or three years old, making the date thus about 1827. Whatever may be the date, Captain MacGregor and his men lived here for a considerable number of years, and caught great quantities of fish, mainly whitefish and herring, which they shipped mostly to Detroit. The Captain had a contract with a Detroit firm to ship them 3000 barrels or more yearly, for which he was to receive one dollar per barrel. It is said that he traded also with Toledo and several ports on Lake Huron and the Rivers. Associated with Captain MacGregor, in the fish trade, was his son Murray. Like his father he spoke four languages, as occasion required,—Gaelic, English, French, and Ojibway. In A. M. Stephen's "Early Days of Owen Sound," it is recorded that in the spring of 1843, "Captain Alexander McGregor and his son Murray bought a sailing vessel of fifteen ton burden called The Fly, from Mr. W. C. Boyd in Owen Sound" (on Georgian Bay). This was doubtless one of those vessels used for trading between Main-Station and Detroit.

But evil days came to the Captain and his crew. Until the late forties no fishing licenses had



been issued by the Government for Lake Huron. It was at this time that a number of people, jealous of the Captain's success, formed the Niagara Fishing Company and secured the sole license for the waters. ¶The Captain forsook his Island home, took up his abode in Tobermory, and later on in Manitoulin Island. He now lies buried at Whitefish, the Old Hudson Bay Post, by the mouth of the Whitefish River, far from the scenes of his early labors. ¶But the memory of this pioneer fisherman, the Hendrick Hudson of the Saugeen Islands, is still cherished in the region of which he once was chief.

The "son Murray" later known as Captain A. Murray MacGregor, after leaving Main-Station sailed on all the five Great Lakes. He was Captain of the steamer Chicora, Spartan, and Francis Smith, and from 1884 was captain of the Dominion Hydrographic Surveying Steamer Bayfield. His intimate knowledge of our waters and his untiring zeal in duty gave him the enviable reputation of being one of the greatest pilots of our Lakes. He died in Windsor in 1903 and was buried in Goderich. ¶One of his sons was drowned in the sad wreck of the Asia; another son is Captain Ed. MacGregor of Sarnia; another is Captain Wm. MacGregor, Dominion Examiner for Masters and Mates at Windsor, and Commodore of the Ferry Fleet of River Detroit. ¶The traditions of the sea have thus been well and honourably upheld by the descendants of the Old Captain. And may we not then justly claim the Saugeen Fishing Islands as the cradle of the family's greatness?

LATER FISHING The fishing at the Islands was carried on for a time by the Niagara Fishing Company, but with little success. They sold out in 1848 to Captain John Spence and Captain William Kennedy, the first settlers of Southampton. Captain Kennedy left on the Polar Expedition of 1852 to search for the lost Franklin, but Captain Spence and his sons fished and sailed the Lake for half a century. ¶In the fifties and sixties, Robert and John Rowan of Southampton engaged in fishing at the Islands and made their headquarters on the Island (No. 20) which now bears their name. ¶Old Larry Bellmore belongs to about the same period, his headquarters being on the Island that also bore his name, but which name has since been partially eclipsed by that of a more famous inhabitant called "the Wildman", whose story will



be related among the legends of the Islands. Larry also erected a little cabin on Cranberry Island, near Fisher's Bay. Larry's sons, Frank, Larry, and Jo, live at Southampton and often visit the waters long frequented by their father. ¶Captain Jim Humphrey of Southampton, also belongs to this period.

We now come to the later period of fishing,—that of the seventies. At Whitefish Island the McAuleys of Southampton were early established. Captain George McAuley was drowned in the wreck of his supply vessel the "Rob Roy" off Chief's Point in 1864, his body being found by Vet. Cole's father near Lonely Island. His brothers Donald and Neil also fished at Whitefish, Neil being drowned at the mouth of the Saugeen River. ¶Other fishermen who should be mentioned are Bowes of Port Elgin, "Rorie" McKenzie of Southampton, William Morrison of Kincardine (after whom Morrison's Cove at Main-Station is named), Nathaniel Wilkie and his father, who lived for five years in the Old Fort, Captain Dan McLeod of Southampton, William McKenzie and sons Murdoch and Hector who fished in Huether's Bay, Captain McLeod of Goderich, who was wrecked in the "Gold Hunter" off Round Island, old Joe Longe who lived on the Jack Islands forty years ago, members of the Canada Company of Goderich who fished at Burke and Beament Islands, Captain Sam Varey, Frank Pope, and John Devine, drowned twelve years ago near the Sable, and John Walsh who in quite recent years had pound-net license for the waters round about Whitefish.

VESSELS It was exactly one hundred years after the wreck of the Griffin before a sailing vessel again entered Lake Huron,—the Enterprise in 1779. During the war of 1812 the Confiance and Surprise, transports used by the British, sailed on Lake Huron, but had their headquarters at Nottawasaga Bay. In the thirties and forties, schooners and supply vessels increased in numbers. Captain MacGregor sailed the Fly; Captain Duncan Rowan (a brother of the fishermen) and his wife, who was as good a sailor as himself and is still living, sailed the Mary Ann and Emily. Captain Spence's most noted boat was the old Sea Gull. The first steamer on Lake Huron was the Gore in 1847. Captain Rowan's famous "Ploughboy" from 1856 brought many settlers into Bruce County and called at Main-Station.



SETTLEMENT OF SHORE The mainland of Amabel and Albemarle was opened to settlers about 1855, some of the early ones on the shore being Joseph Bellmore, David Cook, Dan and Matt Wrenshaw. Later came Walter Fernies, William Ayers, Albemarles, William McKenzie, Albert Reid Sr., Vances, Buyers and Dan Stewart of Pike Bay. ¶Rev. Charles Hurlburt, the first minister of the Indians here, opened a station at Saugeen in 1830. Rev. William B. Danard, still living a familiar and respected personage at Oliphant, has too, served well his time as pioneer minister of the district, and sometimes preaches in the Campers' Church. ¶The first Reeve of the townships of Amabel and Albemarle was Mr. Ludwig Kribs, and the first of Amabel township alone was Mr. James Allen. ¶The Oliphant Post Office was established on April 1st, 1875, and like the town-plot was named after the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who negotiated the treaty of transfer of the Queen's Bush land to the Crown. The first Postmaster was Mr. William McCutcheon.

HISTORY OF WATER HEIGHT As the height of the water on Lake Huron has much to do with the usefulness of the water in the vicinity of Oliphant, it would be interesting to know something of its history. The rise and fall of the water follows an uncertain cycle of years. The lowest year in the Dominion records of Lake Huron was 1819 when its height above sea-level was 579 feet; other low years were 1866, 1868, 1869, 1879, 1896, and 1911. The highest year on record was 1838 when the height was 584 ft. 8 in.; other high years were 1861, 1870, 1871, 1883, 1884, 1885 and 1886.

The Chicago Drainage Canal completed in 1900 takes 7000 cubic feet of water per second from Lake Huron-Michigan, which, according to the Department of Marine and Fisheries has lowered the lake five and one quarter inches below what it would otherwise have been. Apparently however the lowest ebb of the tide has just passed, and we trust, we are now beginning upon "the seven years of plenty."



"Here there are a few islands—some distance off shore near a place called Oliphant.

"The blue lake is rocking,
Out over its bosom the white gulls are flocking,
Far down in the west the dim islands are lying,
While through the hushed vapors the shores are replying."

Wilfred Campbell—in "The Canadian Lake Region."



DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES



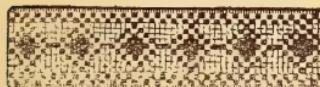
Now purpose giving a somewhat detailed description of the shores and numerous islands of Oliphant, as well as an account of the origin of their names as far as is known. Amongst the descriptions will be given a few stories and legends connected with the places, some quite romantic and more or less authentic, but which we choose to separate from the historical sketches we have just given.

The first name given to Lake Huron was *Mer douce* (fresh-water sea) as recorded in Champlain's map of *Novelle France*; in Sanson's map the lake was called *Karegnon*; in Father Hennepin's map, *Lac d'Orleans ou Hurons*; and afterwards *Lac des Hurons* and *Lac Huron*. ¶ The original name of the Islands was the *Ghegheto Islands*, a form of the Ojibway word "gigoika" meaning "plenty of fish". The Islands were also known as the *Fishing Islands*, the *Saugeen Islands* (after the mainland), and now more often, as the *Oliphant Islands*.

The earlier form of "Saugeen" was "Saugink."

SANDY FORMATION The mainland of the Peninsula opposite the Islands is mostly low lying and sandy, forming in several places small sand-dunes. The area between the shore and the Islands, from one to two miles wide, has been filled in with sand, leaving large areas of shallow water, miles in extent, over which people may walk or drive. At low water great stretches of sand show their rippled, yellow surfaces; and some of the islands become attached to the mainland or to each other. So it is, that a definition of an island at Oliphant is "a piece of land with sand all around it."

THE MAINLAND We shall now trace the shore-line of the Lake, from the mouth of the Sable River (once Rapid River), where the Ojibway Reserve lies, northward to the farther end of the Islands at Pike Bay, a distance of some ten or twelve miles. ¶ The first large extension of land is Chief's



Point where a beacon erected by the Stewart Survey, stands out quite prominently. From Wrenshaw's Point close to the north, the shore curves in by Kidd and Lonely Islands. ¶Hawksnest Island, a picturesque spot, at times a part of the mainland and at times an island, comes next. Just north of it the "Diagonal Road" from Wiarton enters by way of Marie Street. The town-plot of Oliphant, laid out at the time of the Rankin Survey, reaches from this street northward one mile. Here it was expected that a commercial centre would have sprung up, a hope which has never been realized and which has doubtless long since passed away. ¶Point au Rock is a small peninsula stretching outward from the centre of the town-plot. Westward from it is a marshy formation of reeds, through which the far-famed Gut Channel passes, forming the key of inside navigation between the North and South. The name is far from being attractive, but it is time-honoured, and will doubtless remain for all time. ¶North of the town-plot is the Twenty-Fourth Side-road of Amabel, above which is Reid Point, where the remains may be seen of Richard Carter's dock. Northward from Crab Cove lies Red Bay, its shore being a sloping stretch of land covered with open woods, many of the trees beeches, which form a beautiful natural park. The driveway, passing along the gravel beach here adds much to the beauty of the place. In a portion of the old Huron camping ground is the deserted cemetery, where many a sturdy Huron warrior sleeps his last long sleep. ¶Still further beyond is Golden Valley or Howden Vale, marked by an old wharf and saw-mill, then St. Jean Point, Pike Bay, Purgatory Bay, and Little Pike Bay, all delightful spots, and well known fishing grounds.

SIX GROUPS OF ISLANDS The Islands in all number over seventy and vary in size from a mere shoal of flat rock with a few currant bushes growing thereon, to the largest, Cranberry, containing one hundred and twenty-four acres. They may be roughly divided into six groups, two south of the Gut and four north. The first is the Southern group consisting of Orr, Kidd, Lonely, Hawksnest, Whiskey, Cigar, and Whitefish. Next comes the Central group,—Smokehouse, the Jacks, Cranberry, Rabbit, and Blueberry. North of Indian Channel is Frog Island group,—Big Squaw, Little Squaw, Frog, Sunset and Rock. Outside of these forming a line of protection from the open lake are the Rowdies,—McKecknie's, Wildman's,





**Captain A. Murray MacGregor,
1822(?)—1903,**

**Who with his father
lived at Main-Station**

↑ ON WILDMAN'S ISLAND ↓



◀ EARLY CAMPERS, OLIPHANT. ▶



Mr. B. B. Miller, Wiarton,
On Smokehouse.



Rev. Wm. B. Danard, Oliphant,
Pioneer Minister.



Rev. J. S. Hardy, Locklash,
on Mainland.



Bowe's, Rowan's, Rockhaven, and Scotch Bonnet; originally to the mariners, only the three north ones were known as the Rowdies. The fifth is Main-Station, an island separated from the others and of sufficient importance to stand alone as a group. The last is the Northern group,—Little and Big Burke, Deadman's (Basswood), Haystack, Argyle, Wawa, Evelyn, Rush, Warren, Gull, Beament, Snake (McCallum's), Cavalier, Green (Kolffage), Round (Gheghehto), Tyson, and Martindale's.

Besides the islands may be mentioned some shoals and rocks in these waters well known to mariners,—as Scout, Harrison, Chimney, and Drake Shoals, Corsair Reef and Hattie Rock.

THE MORE IMPORTANT ISLANDS Kidd Island at the south is a verdant spot of thick woods, surrounded at low water entirely by sand. Lonely Island is more generally a peninsula than an island, and is called on the Stewart Chart Lonely Point. . . It has deep water on the north and west.

Whiskey Island, situated about half a mile from shore, is circular in shape, and is covered with thick beautiful woods. The island is not inappropriately named. It seems that many years ago, an illicit whiskey-still existed here and as far as is known did good service. One Sunday in the Captain MacGregor days, it is related, the fishermen from Main-Station held a Bacchanalian celebration which ended in a general fight. It was from then on that the fishermen called the place Whiskey Island. Lately the name has been changed to "Shamrock," but it is hard to forget the old name. The site of the Henry Kelso still at the north end of the Island is yet pointed out.

Whitefish is a splendid island, wooded, and containing fourteen acres. It has deep harborage for boats and has long been connected with the fishing trade. Some fishermen's houses of the McAuley days stand on its shore.

Smokehouse Island (No. 10) is the large island just north of Whiskey and separated from it by Smokehouse Channel. It contains over forty acres, thickly wooded with cedar, tamarac, and spruce. At the southern corner are the remains of the old Schell saw-mill, burned down about 1885. The Island was named by the Ojibways who had a smoke-house here for smoking their fish.



Jack Island (No. 11), now called Montrose, contains eleven acres, and is one of a group of eight islands, generally known as the Jacks, situated just outside of Smokehouse. The south end of the main island is wooded, and the balance is covered here and there with large clumps of trees.

Rabbit Island is a well sheltered island, lying north of Smoke-house, and is attached at low water to its neighbor, Cranberry. It is of high ground and is thickly wooded.

Cranberry Island is the largest and one of the most beautiful of the entire group of islands. It is said that along with Rabbit Island it was in early years called Squaw Island. One large opening, Fisher's Bay, on Indian Channel, affords shelter from the sea on the north and west. The soil is fertile, berries and wild flowers growing in abundance. The large open space opposite Rabbit Island is a beautiful natural park often used as a pleasure ground. ¶Little Blueberry Island, a half mile from shore, is a pretty little isle of the inland lake, and serves as a Haliway House on the trip from shore to Cranberry.

Little Squaw Island is a beautiful island beside the deep water of Indian Channel. It is of high ground, faces in two directions, the Channel and the "Front," and is protected from the west winds by Big Squaw. Its area is fourteen acres. ¶Big Squaw Island is about the size of Smoke-house and is covered with evergreen trees, amongst which is an occasional birch and poplar. There is now a small lake in the centre of the island which is very picturesque.

Frog Island has a distinguished name, the origin of which may be easily conjectured. The island contains twenty-one acres wooded with large tamarac and spruce, and soil high and fertile. Huether's Bay is on the north side, and there is deep water on the east. On the south side of the island is a fine sandy beach for bathing. The original name of Frog Island and the Squaws was Indian Island.

Sunset Island (No. 17) is the outermost of the Frog Island group, and is wooded similarly to the others. Several old trails run through the island, which were probably at one time used by the Redmen. A small island (17 a) adjacent on the west has good landing and is said to have been one of the homes of "the Wildman." ¶Rock Island is a flat shoal with short trees and shrubs, between Frog and Sunset.



The Rowdies are the five outer islands beyond the Frog Island group. They are well named as they look like Jollyfellows. Their name came from the Rowan brothers the fishermen. ¶Bowe's Island (No. 19), is the largest one of the Rowdie group and is named after a fisherman from Port Elgin who once used it as a fishing centre. ¶Rowan's Island (No. 20) is the next largest, named after Fisherman Robert Rowan, who lived and fished here for several years, and built the little log cabin which still weathers the Lake Huron storms. The area of the island is about three acres. It has quite a number of trees on the north half and has a good depth of water on the east which provides harborage for boats.

Wildman's Island is situated to the south of Bowe's Island. It is a small quaint looking spot having a few tall trees rising out of short bushes and undergrowth and three small old buildings which serve as a protection for fishermen in the fall of the year. Two of the houses, one of them a landing place for boats, belonged to old Larry Bellmore, after whom the island was formerly called, and the other one to "the Wildman" who lived here years ago, and whose story is perhaps worthy of being related:

THE WILDMAN'S STORY Many years ago a man belonging to a Lake Huron hamlet was disappointed in love by the woman he had hoped to make his wife. And so deep in sorrow he fled far away from civilization to the Saugeen Islands. There he chose the outermost island of the whole group as his home, and found whatever solace he might in the roar of the breakers of Lake Huron. ¶He built for himself a strange little house of logs and driftwood picked up on the beach, and in this he lived for several years, protected against storm and cold. He had a dugout canoe and an old fish-net he had found, and with these he went about amongst the Islands, fishing and hunting game, and gathering wild fruits.

He lived a lonely life, seldom showing himself to anyone not even the fishermen who sometimes came to fish in the waters round about. His face was sad and careworn, as though he carried with him a mental burden almost too great to bear. When approached he would speed away with powerful strokes in his primitive boat, and at times when returning in the evening from the pursuit of game would give vent to loud weird calls, which could sometimes be heard on the mainland. So they called him the Wildman.

It happened that in the fall of one year at this time, some fishermen were staying on Main-Station



Island engaged in their regular fall fishing. A storm had blown for several days, and one night when it had about reached its height, from amidst the sound of the breakers and the sighing trees, the fishermen thought they heard far-off calls for help. They listened, but heard only the storm. ¶In the morning however, when going through Main-Station Channel, the fishermen found the empty canoe of the Wildman swept up on shore; they knew then that what they had heard in the storm, was the call of the Wildman in distress. No trace of the man was ever found, and whether in the storm he had met with accident, or having found his life's burden too heavy to bear longer, he had committed himself forever to the sea, can never be told. Sometimes however in our Fancy, in the dusk of evening or when the storm rages high, we still hear the Call of the Wildman, and see him hurry away in his canoe to his island by the sea.

Rockhaven (No. 19) is a picturesque little island, with a number of tall trees growing on it, forming a circle of protection against the storms which sometimes beat against its rocky shores.

Famed Scotch Bonnet, just north of Rockhaven, received its name from some Scotch fishermen who noted that the trees on it were shaped after the manner of a Scotch bonnet. The sea-gulls build their nests here each year, and previous to a storm, can be heard swooping back and forth before the wind.

MAIN-STATION ISLAND is the most famous and romantic of all!

In early years of navigation the island was noted as being the only harbour of refuge on the lake for many miles along the coast. On the north the deep water channel led in from the lake, and on the east, inside the point was the natural harbour where even yet sailing craft may be seen lying in till the storm goes by. On the northwest promontory are the remains of the beacon tower erected by Bayfield in his survey of the Lake. On the east side are the remains of three different docks, used at various periods of the Island's history. The one farthest north opposite the Old Fort has a gravel gangway leading down from the shore, while some of its old cribs of logs may still be seen under the water. A few yards to the south of this, apparently leading from the old stone quarries, is a smaller dock, of which only a few small timbers and stones remain. The dock at the south-eastern corner of the Island in Morrison's Cove, has been falling to



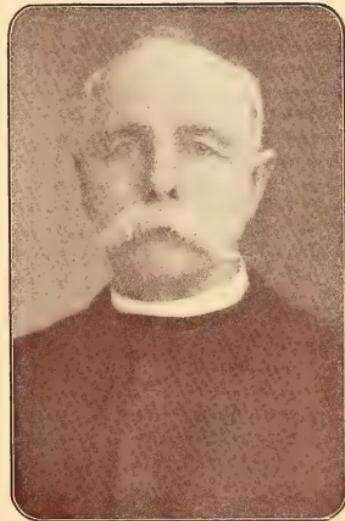
◀ PAST PRESIDENTS OLIPHANT CAMPERS' ASSOCIATION. ▶



Mr. Thos. E. Hay, Listowel,
Pres. 1904-05.



Mr. S. W. Cross, Wiarton,
First President, O.C.A.
1903-04.



Rev. Wm. Henderson, Hanover,
Pres. 1905-06.



◀ PAST PRESIDENTS OLIPHANT CAMPERS' ASSOCIATION ▶



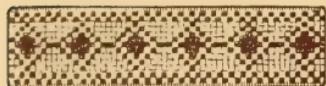
Mr. F. O. Clark, Listowel,
Pres. 1906-07.



Mr. Gideon Kastner, Wiarton,
Pres. 1907-08.



Mr. S. Jerry Cameron, Wiarton,
Pres. 1908-09.

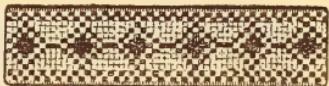


pieces the last few years, but many of its large timbers are still partly in place. Above this in the memory of people living there was a large fish-house which was used in earlier days. A few rods to the east of this dock lies the stranded *Phoenix* sunk deep into the sand.

The Old Fort is a strange romantic structure, which seems to belong to another age and to another life. Many have said that it was built in the French regime by the *coureurs-de-bois*, and played a part in their fur-trade; others have claimed that it was a *Hudson Bay Post*; and some imaginative people have made it the weird home of ghosts that dance in the moonlight. ¶The only proofs at hand, to indicate that this building may have been a reconstructed fort are, first,—that it was situated on the old route from *Fort Michilimackinac* eastward across the portage to *Sturgeon Bay* (*Colpoy's*), and second,—that in a French map of date 1720 there is the plan of a fort on the northeast shore of *Lac Huron*, with the words “*Fort Supose*.” Whether this was a site of an old fort or not, there is ample proof that the walls as built, were erected by Captain MacGregor and his fishermen.

The building is about fifty-eight feet long and has a cross wall at the middle dividing it into two compartments. The west one was apparently the living room; it has in it a large fireplace, still fairly intact, two doors and one window; in the other room in one corner, traces may be seen of a small fireplace, as well as a door and a window. Tradition says that four successive roofs covered the building. ¶The foundation of the old stone lighthouse on the rising ground from the dock still remains. The lighthouse had done service in the early fishing days and about thirty years ago it was taken down and its stone removed to Southampton where it again upholds a light which shows the way to another generation of mariners. ¶Of the old fish-house on the ledge of rock to the east nothing now remains. The garden round about can still be seen, where many rows of gooseberry and currant bushes and one apple tree, are all that are left of a once much more luxuriant place,—

“Near yonder copse where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild.”



Two little cemeteries northeast of the Fort may be found, where Tradition says only five or six have been buried. One of them was a youth who was accidentally drowned off a fishing boat.

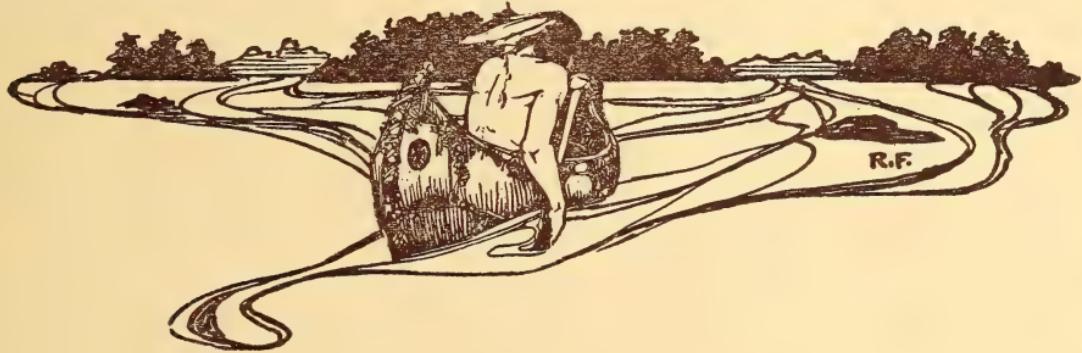
There is also associated with Main-Station, the story of a massacre in the fifties of the fishermen here, by the Ojibway Indians from the mainland. The Indians, it is said, had been trading with the fishermen and had been badly defrauded; the revenge taken by the Indians was an onslaught on the Island and the killing of all the inhabitants except a boy and a girl who hid in what is now known as the Children's Cave at the north end of the Island. The boy was Hiram Cole, a brother of Vet Cole, an old character of Wiarton. ¶About forty years ago Main-Station also played a part in the now almost forgotten Mercer murder.

DEADMAN'S ISLAND The most southerly of the northerly group is a small picturesque island with tall basswood trees which originally gave it the name of Basswood. Of late years, however, it is known by the name of Deadman's Island on account of a dead fisherman having been found here, buried in the crevice of a rock, in 1902, by a party of campers,—Allie Heuter, Chaucer Henderson, Charlie and Ed. Reckin. ¶Little Haystack Island is immediately north and is the shape of a wide haystack from which it received its name. ¶Little and Big Burke Islands are low and scattered, with moderately deep water at the northeast corner. Three large clumps of trees rise above the shorter growth. Just off the south end of the Island is the wreck of the Sarah, a schooner stranded some years ago, owned by Captain Robert Reid of Red Bay. ¶Rush Island next to the north is angular in shape marked with a surveyor's cross at the eastern corner. It is noted for its bass fishing.

Snake Island (No. 36), sometimes called McCallum's Island, at one time had snakes on it, but not now. It has been used for many years by the Gilleans of London. ¶Beyond is Wawa Island, recognized by a wide-spreading tree reaching above the others, and a long shoal just above water to the south. Wawa is the Indian name for wild goose.



On Beament Island, the body of a man was washed up one spring a few years ago. It was supposed by some to have been that of "Cappie" Spence of Southampton, who had been drowned in the lake the previous summer. There are a few old fishermen's huts on the east side. ¶Tyson Island protects Golden Valley Bay and is named after the late A. M. Tyson, its holder. ¶Round Island (or Ghegheto), Cavalier, Argyle, Evelyn, Birch, Warren, and Green Island (Kolfrage), lying between Red Bay and Pike Bay, are surrounded by shallow and shoaly waters forming good grounds for the bass which frequent them. ¶Gull Island is the home of the sea-gulls, where hundreds of them lay their eggs each year, and hatch out their young.



DAWN IN THE ISLAND CAMP.

Beats the great lake in its beauty,
Angry colored with fire,
Red in the mists of the morning
Rocks the wild lake in its ire.

Tossing from headland to headland,
Tipped with the glories of dawn;
With gleaming white reaches of beaches,
That stretch out far, wind-swept and wan.

Dim the dark reels and dips under,
Night wavers and ceases to be;
As God records the manifold mystery
Of the morning and lake round to me.

—Wilfred Campbell.



■ HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE OF CAMPING ■



ND now we come to the camping days!

It would surprise many, who think Oliphant as a summer resort to be but the creature of yesterday, to know that the first real camping party happened just forty-five years ago, in the year 1867.

FIRST CAMPING PARTY The members of this, the first camping party, lived in Wiarton then but a small village of Colpoy's Bay; they were Mr. and Mrs. James Greer, their daughter Charlotte (afterwards Mrs. S. W. Cross), Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Miller, Mr. Thos. Gilpin, Mrs.

Johnson of Meaford, and two or three others, guided by Isaac Wilmott who lived then on the Oliphant shore. The party loaded with provisions and fishing tackle walked in single file along the old portage route from Sturgeon Bay by Boat Lake to the Islands, a distance of about eight miles. They called at Joseph Bellmore's farm to obtain some supplies of vegetables and then proceeded to the shore where a dugout canoe and another boat awaited their arrival. Coming up through the Gut which then had numerous salmon trout in it, they caught three or four of these fish, which they took along with them. On their arrival at Main-Station they found the Old Fort silent and deserted, but still fit for habitation; and so they took up their quarters in it and remained for a whole week. The doors still swung on their hinges, and the table and benches which had probably served in the MacGregor days, were still there. On the mantel shelf, above the fireplace, was a black prow of a vessel decorated with golden scrolls, which, it was supposed, had been picked up on the shore and kept as a relic by the fishermen. The party spent their time exploring the Islands, and fishing trout and whitefish, no bass being taken at that time and scarcely even heard of then.

This camping party took place nearly half a century ago; and of those present six are still alive and recall the happy times they had, making their first visit to the Oliphant Islands. Three members of the



party, Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Miller of Smoke-house, and Mrs. S. W. Cross of Cranberry still frequent the Islands and may be truly considered our Pioneer Campers.

THE HAY FAMILY It is perhaps however more especially to Mr. Thos. E. Hay and his family of Listowel that Oliphant owes its existence as a summer resort. About the year 1877 Mr. Hay with some friends came to the Oliphant shore on a hunting expedition... He was so impressed with the natural beauty of the place that he decided to some day make a summer home here for himself and family. It was in the year 1882 that the son Dr. Henry R. Hay of Wiarton, Dr. Harry Halsted now of Syracuse, N.Y., and Dr. James Kelly of Orangeville since dead, then young medical students, came out to Oliphant to spend a summer vacation, and camped in a tent on Frog Island. In 1884 Mr. and Mrs. Thos. E. Hay and family with two or three other families from Listowel, spent a large part of the summer on shore living in the old Schell mill boarding-house on Rocky Point. Mr. Hay built the first Oliphant summer house on Hawksnest about 1890. From Mr. Hay's visit in 1884, it was his pleasure never to miss a summer at Oliphant till his lamented death in 1911.

OTHER EARLY CAMPERS Besides the Hay family the early campers at the south were, Mr. Fred G. Miller, his brother, Moray Sym, from Wiarton, James Large and Earl Hay of Listowel, on Whiskey Island. Early in the nineties the Goderich party began their regular visits to Main-Station, led by the genial Judge Philip Holt. Among them were Hon. A. M. Ross, Lieut.-Col. Holmes, Mr. Chas. C. Ross, W. Proudfoot, M.L.A., Mr. W. L. Eliot, Sheriff Reynolds, Registrar Wm. Coats, Mr. R. C. Hays, Mr. D. B. Grant, and the late Mr. S. Malcomson. At the north Messrs. John Christie, Tom and Alec Gillean were early located at Snake Island. Mr. A. M. Tyson was pioneer of Red Bay and Golden Valley district.

SALE OF ISANDS The first summer house on the outer islands was that of Mr. Isaac Dunham who purchased Rabbit Island from the Indian Department, and built thereon in 1898. The Islands were withdrawn from sale during the Warren Survey of 1899, and were placed on the market again in 1901. It was then that most of them were purchased for summer homes by the campers.





His Honour
Judge Philip Holt,
Goderich, Early
Camper on Main-Station.

▲ REGATTA ▼
LONELY ISLAND ▼



◀ PAST PRESIDENTS OLIPHANT CAMPERS' ASSOCIATION. ▶



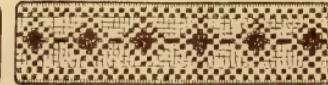
Mr. Chas. J. Halliday, Chesley,
Pres. 1909-10.



Mr. David Huether, Wiarton,
Pres. 1910-11.



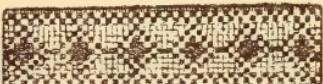
Mr. T. G. Forsyth, Berlin,
Pres. 1911-12.



Mr. S. W. Cross bought Cranberry Island and erected a house thereon in 1902; Mr. D. M. Jermyn bought Whiskey Island and rechristened it Shamrock in honour of his nationality; Mr. B. B. Miller bought Smokehouse; Mr. Wm. Mair of Buffalo, Jack Island, Tamarac, and later Whitefish; Mr. F. O. Clark, Outer Jack Island; Mr. J. P. Newman bought Lonely Island; Mr. T. Moore, Kidd Island; Mr. J. W. Falls, Blueberry; Messrs. David Huether, Robert Nelson and Charles Reckin, Frog Island; Mrs. Margaret A. Latham of Chicago, Big Squaw Island; R. and J. Fleming, and J. H. Fielding, Little Squaw Island; Dr. Jas. A. Fleming, Sunset Island; Mr. S. Dunham, Bowe's Island; Mr. Wm. Hackett, Rockhaven; Mrs. Robert Nelson, Fairhaven; His Honour Judge Philip Holt of Goderich, Main-Station; Messrs. John Ferguson and Wm. Skinner of London, Snake Island; Mr. S. W. Cross, Basswood Island; Mr. James Paterson of Toronto, Rock Island; Miss Jennie Fleming, Scotch Bonnet; Mr. Wm. Horton and Judge Holt Green Island; and Mr. L. H. Yeoman of Mount Forest, Wawa Island.

Besides these mentioned who purchased their islands from the government are a number who located early on the mainland or who bought whole or portions of Islands from those who already held them.

Amongst these are: Rev. Wm. Henderson, Mr. D. G. Miller, Mr. Fred G. Miller, Mr. G. Kastner, Mr. S. Jerry Cameron, Dr. R. M. Fisher of Wiarton, Dr. Roberts, Mr. F. J. King, Rev. J. S. Hardy, Mr. T. G. Forsyth of Berlin, Messrs. A. W. and J. W. Manley, Mr. M. Donnelly, Miss Phoebe Watson, Messrs. B. E. Becktel, David Porter, Josiah Tolton, Dr. T. H. Middleboro and Mr. H. Middleboro of Owen Sound, Messrs. David Wright, John D. Wray of Toronto, J. Johnson, Chas. J. Halliday of Chesley, J. W. Reid of New York, H. K. Engle of Hanover, W. Ewing, G. W. Stewart of Berlin, Arch. W. Baines, A. E. Windsor of Listowel, W. E. Chambers, M.L.A., Harriston, Alex. I. McKecknie, Colin Campbell, J. C. McIntosh of Mount Forest, Howard Scales, Emerson E. Brown of Brantford, James Anderson, C. J. Thornhill, Miss Hagey of Guelph, Rev. J. R. Wilson, Messrs. F. Anthis, A. Dodge, T. J. Moore, P. Cheadle, and Arch. Ward, Miss Clara Fleming, Mr. Gere of Fort Erie, Mr. Wm. Wright, Rev. Ferguson, Dr. A. E. Ruddell of Berlin, Rev. Mr. Cole, Mr. J. J. A. Weir, Mrs. G. M. Yates, Rev. Stewart Atcheson, Dr. H. Bannerman, Messrs.



McLaughlin, J. Ede, Ed. Schmidt, Geo. Hathway of Berlin, R. G. Struthers, Wm. Fishley, John Ferguson, C. J. Mickle of Chesley, and many others.

Those who located at Red Bay were: Messrs Jas. Symon, Robert E. Trout, Rev. D. Anderson of Burlington, Miss E. Bearman, Miss Floyd of Owen Sound, Messrs. George Sakamoto of Toronto, W. A. and J. L. Symon, W. N. Munroe of Palmerston, Rev. Mr. Conning of Burlington.

In the few years of Oliphant's existence as a summering place, it has grown up rapidly. Pretty little summer houses have been erected here and there along the shore and islands, some hidden amongst the evergreens, others out in the open sunshine, some on the well protected islands, and others away out where the great storms of Lake Huron break and almost tear away their moorings. In all there are more than a hundred and fifty camps scattered over the region, and there is scarcely a town in Western Ontario that is not represented in their population.

OLIPHANT CAMPERS' ASSOCIATION

The Oliphant Campers' Association was organized nine years ago in 1903, with Mr. S. W. Cross of Wiarton, as first President. The Association was established to look after those interests which affect the general welfare of the campers, and during its short history has done much service for the public. The Past Presidents are: Mr. Thos. E. Hay of Listowel, 1904; Rev. Wm. Henderson of Wiarton, 1905; Mr. F. O. Clark of Listowel, 1906; Mr. G. Kastner of Wiarton, 1907; Mr. S. J. Cameron of Wiarton, 1908; Mr. Chas. J. Halliday of Chesley, 1909; Mr. David Huether of Wiarton, 1910; Mr. T. G. Forsyth of Berlin, 1911.

The officers for 1912-13 are: Hon. President, Mr. T. G. Forsyth; President, Mr. F. J. King of Hamilton; First Vice-President, Mr. G. W. Stewart of Berlin; Second Vice-President, Mr. G. Kastner; Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. G. E. Reckin of Wiarton; Councillors,—Messrs. F. O. Clark, W. E. Chambers, M.L.A., and R. F. Fleming of Ottawa.

CHARMS We may sum up Oliphant's varied charms in just a few words. It is a place romantic, historic, and beautiful; it has many islands, channels, and by-ways to explore amongst; it has some of the



◀ OFFICERS O. C. A. 1912-13. ▶



Mr. F. J. King, Hamilton,
President.



Mr. G. W. Stewart, Berlin,
First Vice-President.



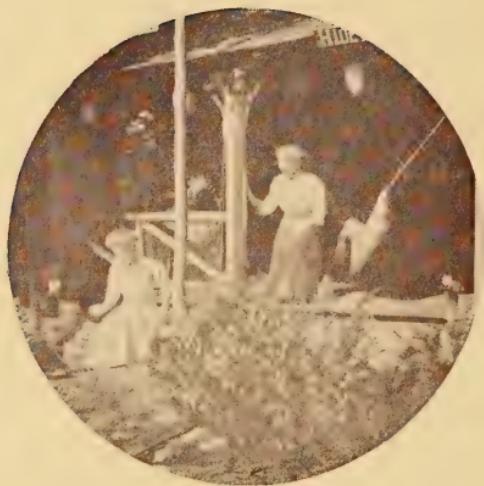
Mr. G. Ed. Reckin, Wiarton,
Secretary-Treasurer.



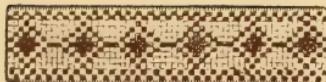
◀ OTHERS OF OLIPHANT. ▶



The Authors,
Campers on Indian Island.



Mrs. Robt. Nelson
and Miss Grace, on Frog Island.

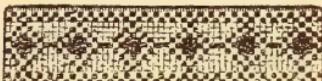


finest bass fishing in the Great Lakes; it has bathing that for warmth of temperature can scarcely be equalled; it has splendid boating—sailing, rowing, paddling, and motor-boating; it has an annual Regatta where strength and skill of body and craft are displayed to advantage; it has three athletic grounds, one on mainland, one on Rabbit Island, and one on Frog Island, the scenes of many ball games and field sports; it has a church, a government dock now lighted, a spring that never runs dry, and may we add, a post office which brings, let us trust, many joys; it has never had a fatality or serious accident, to mar its sense of pleasure; and above all its inhabitants are of a high standard of citizenship, from which emanates a spirit of helpfulness and sociability so necessary in the life of people seeking health, comfort, and happiness.

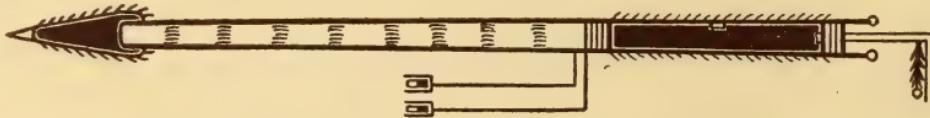
THE REGATTA The first gathering of the campers was in the form of a picnic held in 1903 at Cranberry, the home of Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Cross. The next year it was held at Hawk'snest Island. In 1907 the picnic was changed to a regatta and held off the Government Dock built the year before. The Regatta has proved an extremely popular annual event in which aquatic sports are keenly contested by all classes of campers old and young. Several of the public-spirited campers have donated cups for the more important boat races, adding much to the interest of the events. Owing to the low water of 1911, it was decided to change the place of the Regatta to Lonely Island, the water of which is especially adapted for such an event.

ADIEU And now we must say farewell to Oliphant, and its Islands, and "our own broad lake." We have followed their life from the romantic days of the redman, the pioneer mariner and fisherman, to the pleasure-seeking days of the present. And may we hope for those who sojourn here, that the Future may hold in store joys even greater than the Past, and beyond even our generous anticipation, and perhaps too, find "younger hands" than ours that "may strike the strings and tell of Huron's awful grandeur, and her smooth and moonlight slumbering."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT It is our pleasure to acknowledge here the kind and valued assistance rendered by a large number of people who have supplied valuable information which we have used in com-



piling our Sketches. But for the help of these people our story would very often have been incomplete and inaccurate. Chief among them are: Captain Albert J. Reid, who has sailed Lake Huron for thirty-five years; Mr. John Reid and Mr. Murdoch Mackenzie, farmers of Amabel Township; Mr. B. B. Miller, Miss Delia Dunham, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nelson, campers from Wiarton; Mr. J. J. A. Weir of Berlin; Mr. John Johns, who took passage on the *Ploughboy*; Mr. Duncan McLeod of Southampton; Miss May Stephens, Editor, Owen Sound; Capt. A. G. McLeod, of S.S. *Frank Rockfeller*; Mr. Harry G. Tucker, Local Historian, and Mr. A. J. Chisholm, Bass-fisher, of Owen Sound; Mr. Norman Robertson, Walkerton; Dr. Wilfred Campbell, Ottawa; Mr. W. J. Stewart, Chief Dominion Hydrographer; Mr. H. R. Holmden of Archives, Ottawa; Capt. J. G. Boulton, Quebec; and Miss E. Pauline Johnson, Vancouver. Mr. Fred G. Miller, Hawkesbury; and His Honour Judge Philip Holt, Goderich.

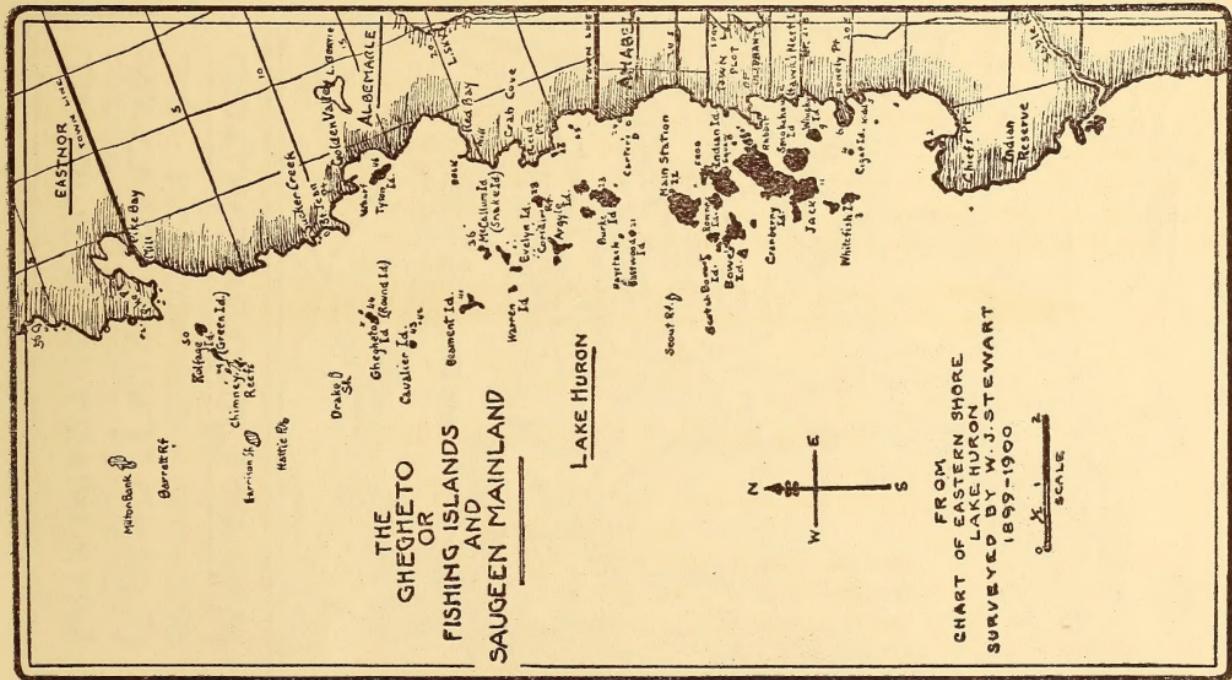


TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS.

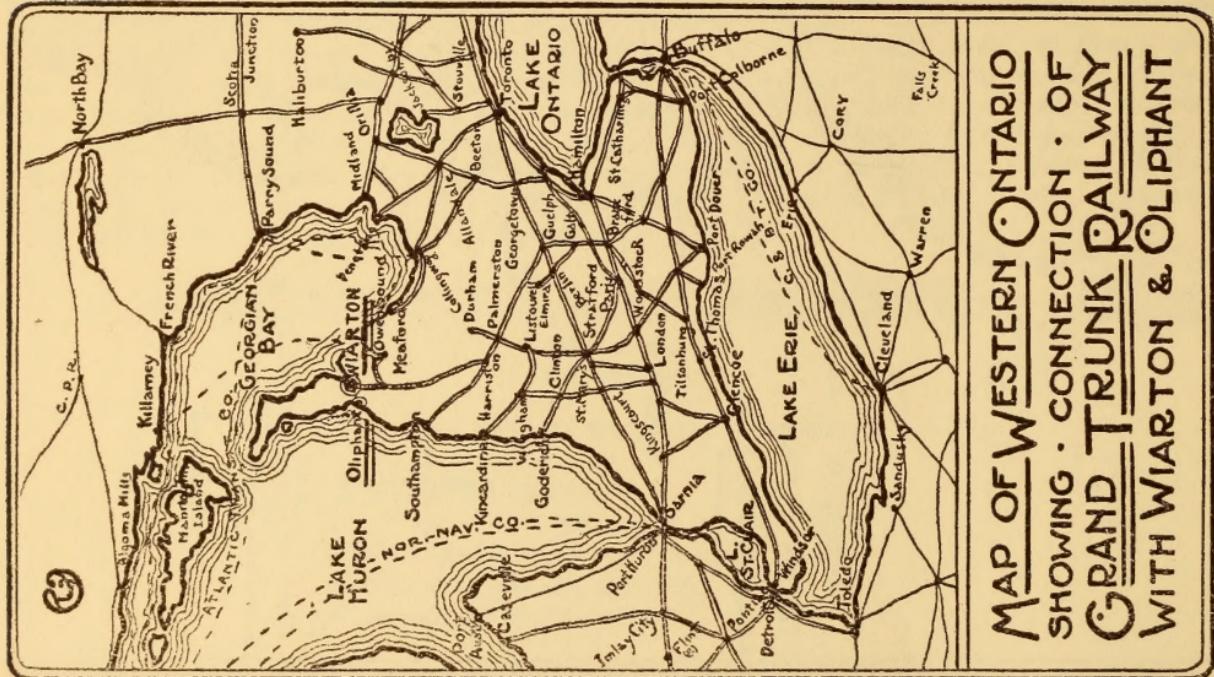
"Sailing into the cloud-land,
Sailing into the sun,
Into the crimson portals ajar when life is done!
O! dear, dead race, my spirit too
Would fain sail after unto you."

—E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake).

L A K E H U R O N C O A S T



RAILWAY VOZZEUT-OZ



MAP OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SHOWING CONNECTION OF
GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY
WITH WIARTON & OLIPHANT

